



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

August 16-September 15, 2009

AGRICULTURE

Helping Afghans Monitor Endangered Species:

Afghanistan is home to numerous rare and endangered species, including the snow leopard and Marco Polo sheep. The United States, in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), is helping Afghanistan monitor these animals and protect its environmental heritage. In the remote northern provinces of Badakhshan and Nuristan, the USG is training local community members and forest rangers to use motion-sensing cameras to assess wildlife population trends. Monitoring wildlife through remote cameras will help the Government of Afghanistan develop better natural resource management plans in cooperation with local populations.



This snow leopard was photographed by a motion-sensing camera in the Wakhan Corridor of Badakhshan.

PHOTO: Wildlife Conservation Society

Approximately 80% of Afghans rely on the environment for their livelihood, so it is essential to gauge animal populations and maintain healthy ecosystems. In addition to monitoring endangered species and other large mammals, the USG and WCS have helped Afghanistan's National Environmental Protection Agency develop the country's first protected species list. The list provides legal protection to 33 threatened and endangered species, including the snow leopard, of which there is an estimated population of fewer than 100 in the country. Additionally, the United States helped Afghanistan establish its first national park at the Band-e-Amir lakes in April 2009 and pass the Environment Law in 2007.



Women prepare growing media at a women-owned and -managed vegetable greenhouse.

PHOTO: USAID/IDEA-NEW

Women-owned Greenhouses Thrive: The U.S. Government is committed to creating economic opportunities for women, and building their skills so that they can support themselves and their families. Over the past few years, the USG has helped women throughout Afghanistan open greenhouses to grow vegetables and tree saplings to sell. In the eastern region of Afghanistan, 18 women-owned greenhouses are now self-sustainable, and are no longer receiving any financial assistance. However, the United States continues to support these women entrepreneurs through training and marketing assistance.

Recently, the USG provided training for 36 women greenhouse owners and employees on how to



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

August 16-September 15, 2009

prepare growing media. Participants from 12 greenhouses in Laghman and Nangarhar learned how to prepare soil that will produce maximum yields in their greenhouses. This nutrient-rich soil will be used this fall during seedling planting, the sales from which will contribute to the continued sustainability of the greenhouses.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Construction Starts on Two Kabul High Schools:

The United States Government and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) have started construction work on Ghazi Boys High School and Sardar Kabuli Girls High School in Kabul, Afghanistan. When completed in 2010, these USG-funded schools will provide modern classrooms, laboratories, and other learning facilities for approximately 10,000 Afghan high school students. The schools are being designed and constructed to international seismic safety standards to prevent tragic school collapses during earthquakes like those in Pakistan in 2005 and China in 2008.



Construction begins on a high school in Kabul.

PHOTO: USAID/UNOPS

The final designs for both Kabul high schools fully comply with the 2006 International Building Code, which is considered the most stringent engineering standard in use today. As a result, the Sardar Kabuli Girls High School will be the most structurally sound multi-story building in Afghanistan. These design standards have also been incorporated in design modifications for Ghazi Boys High School and numerous other USG-funded building projects across the country.



USAID Rep. Eng. Gul Afghan Saleh noted the U.S. Government's commitment to strengthen Afghan institutions.

PHOTO: USAID/CAWSA

Improving Urban Water Supply and Sanitation:

The U.S. Government is committed to working with Afghan companies to create a comprehensive water and sanitation service in urban Afghanistan. On August 4, USAID signed an \$800,000 grant agreement with the newly formed Afghanistan Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Corporation (AUWSSC) to support water infrastructure rehabilitation, equipment purchase, and training for the municipal water departments of Mazari Sharif, Jalalabad, Gardez, and Ghazni. Ultimately, residents of these cities will enjoy improved access to clean water and sanitation services, as well as a more sustainable water supply, to strengthen public health and hygiene.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

August 16-September 15, 2009

Improved wastewater management practices will also help to protect and preserve Afghanistan's environment.

In his remarks at the signing ceremony, USAID Representative Eng. Gul Afghan Saleh stated, "This agreement facilitates the establishment of aggressive performance targets, service expansion, and high priority operational improvements that will deliver increasing quantities of clean, potable water to customers. This agreement reaffirms the commitment of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Government of the United States to strengthen local institutions and infrastructure throughout the country for the improved health and welfare of the people of Afghanistan."

PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM

Barg-e-Matal Villagers Rebuild Their Town and Way of Life:

In remote Nuristan Province, the people of Barg-e-Matal have lived a peaceful, agrarian lifestyle for centuries. However, insurgents disrupted that lifestyle twice last year by attacking the district center. Local authorities, supported by villagers, defended their town and repelled the aggressors. This June, the situation was different. Before another attack by the insurgents, the village leaders fled, first to the mountains of nearby Badakhshan and later to Kabul. In Kabul, the leaders requested reinforcement from Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). By that time, Barg-e-Matal had been severely damaged by the attack, and residents no longer trusted their local leaders to protect them.



A shopping street in Barg-e-Matal, taken before attacks by insurgents.

PHOTO: USAID/Nuristan PRT

To restore that trust and improve lives, the Provincial Reconstruction Team, Coalition Forces, and ANSF have worked with the leaders to engage the community in its own recovery – despite daily insurgent attacks. Some 100 school boys arrived at their school to "clean it up and prepare it for classes," as one explained. The local Provincial Reconstruction Team supports the boys in their endeavor and is compensating them for their work. Similarly, adults are separating burned wood from still-useful stone and other building material so that the reconstruction and repair of damaged homes can begin. Each person earns a wage, bringing needed income into the community. Villagers now see that Afghan and Coalition Forces are committed to long-term assistance, and they have also started to provide needed information to soldiers. Coalition Forces and the U.S. Government are currently looking for ways to help the community prepare for winter.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

August 16-September 15, 2009

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

United States Partners with Afghan Government to Improve Local Public Administration:

On August 31, 2009, Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne launched a \$21.5 million program that works in partnership with the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) to train Afghanistan's civil servants. Over the next 18 months, more than 15,000 civil servants across all 34 provinces will improve their skills in human resource management, financial management, project management, strategic planning, and procurement. Programs such as this, based on the "Afghan First" principle, deepen the Afghan-U.S. development partnership. Together, the U.S. Government and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan are promoting Afghan-led development, which supports sustainable Afghan leadership at all levels.



Ambassador Wayne speaks with IARCSC students.

PHOTO: Dan Wilkinson

The IARCSC equips provincial civil servants with the right skills and tools so that ministries can move decision making and resources closer to the Afghan people, enabling sub-national governments to be more efficient and responsive. IARCSC Chairman Dr. Ahmad Mushahed thanked the U.S. government and the international community for meeting a vital need in Afghanistan. "Lack of [civil servants'] capacity has been one of the main challenges for the government and we hope, with the help of the international community, that we can build the level of capacity that is needed to meet the demands of the nation," he said.



Mobile phone tower in Chamkani.

PHOTO: USAID/Deloitte MCIT

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Paktya Border Town Inaugurates Mobile Phone Service:

Thanks to intensive efforts to bring mobile phone service to more Afghans, 200,000 citizens living near the town of Chamkani are now connected to the wider world. Chamkani sits on the border with Pakistan and its citizens have never before been able to use cell phones to call the doctor or keep in touch with relatives. The two new mobile towers that make cell phone service possible are situated in the shadow of Firebase Chamkani, which offers protection from extremist militants. Afghan Wireless and MTN will provide service, having overcome challenges that included disputed property rights, logistics, and network connection problems due to Chamkani's



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

August 16-September 15, 2009

remote location. The U.S. Government, the U.S. Military, and the Afghan Ministry of Communications and Information Technology are now working to create a task force that will accelerate the deployment of mobile service along the Afghan border with Pakistan.



The Afghan delegation at the trade expo.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED

Afghan Entrepreneurs Attend Trade Fair in Tajikistan:

From August 4-6, 122 Afghan small and medium enterprises (SMEs) attended the Tajikistan Development Exposition, thanks to support from the USG, the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Afghanistan Investment Support Agency, and the Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan. The trade fair provided an opportunity for Afghan SMEs from around the country to showcase their products, expand their business networks with a regional trading partner, and promote business and investment opportunities in Afghanistan. The exhibited

products and services included marble, carpet, plastics, leather, handicrafts, agribusiness, and business services. Significant contract negotiations for the purchase of plastics, olive oil, and carpets are underway, leading to new export opportunities.

EDUCATION

Teaching Tools Improve Instruction: Skilled teachers with access to quality training resources are able to help students learn their lessons more effectively. Between mid-July and the end of August, U.S. Government representatives worked with 25 Afghan Ministry of Education subject specialists to create four sets of teacher training materials. These materials will help Afghan teachers who teach grades 4-6 grades 7-9 math and science; and grades 10-12 humanities, math, and science. Each set of training materials provides simple but effective teaching strategies and activities, which are embedded in the actual curriculum of each subject. The materials will eventually reach more than 100,000 teachers throughout Afghanistan, building their capacity in the classroom and helping to raise teaching standards.



USAID teacher trainers work with Ministry of Education specialists.

PHOTO: USAID/BESST